

CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Old Growth Trees Protected by Ruling

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection passes new rule to protect ancient trees

Sacramento- The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection voted 7-1 today to adopt a new regulation protecting old growth trees on private lands in California.

"This new rule closes a loophole in the existing regulations. It will prohibit the cutting of these heritage trees without an environmental review," said Andrea Tuttle, Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). "Now, old growth trees will be evaluated for their importance to wildlife and contribution to the forest ecosystem," added Tuttle.

The Board confronted the contentious issue of defining old growth by ruling that any tree in existence before 1800 would be subject to the regulation.

The policy will require a property owner to either file a Timber Harvest Plan (THP) or obtain an environmental assessment by a Registered Professional Forester. Violation of this rule could result in a misdemeanor or civil penalties.

"The time to act is now. Protecting old growth is important to the people of California," said Stan Dixon, Board of Forestry chair. "Today's action is the first time the state has explicitly addressed the protection of individual old growth trees in regulation," added Chairman Dixon.

Most of California's large old trees are protected in public ownership. California has state redwood parks plus Redwood National Park which collectively comprise about 200,000 acres of land - either currently old growth forest or growing into it for future generations.

The rule is to be forwarded to the Office of Administrative Law by October 16. It will become effective on January 1, 2002.

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